

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending March 5, 2011

Dutch Caribbean – Coast Guard Releases Annual Plan 2011

The Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard (DCCG) released their annual plan 2011. Counter narcotics, trafficking in persons (TIP), illegal immigration, and Search and Rescue operations are the main focus of the DCCG for the coming year. Close cooperation with local and foreign law enforcement agencies remain very important.

The continuation of the Terrorist Incident Response Plan (TIRP) should improve counter-terrorism operations.

The Dutch expect its efficiency will be limited because of flight information region (FIR) issues with Venezuela. The Dutch are not allowed to fly through the Venezuela-operated FIR after the Dutch acknowledged a Coast Guard helicopter accidentally entered the Venezuelan FIR (an aviation term used to describe airspace in which a flight information and alerting service are provided). The FIR is not sovereign territory of any specific country. (Various media)

Curacao – Overwhelming Energy Street Festival Performance

The Energy Street Festival co-sponsored United States Consulate General Curacao hit the streets of the downtown Willemstad (Punda) area. A group of energized dancers performed various awe-inspiring Flash Mobs on several days, despite a downpour of rain. The Energy Street Festival is a great example of youth who express the positive while distancing themselves from the negative. The New York-based Urban Dance Collective worked with local dancers and choreographers to make this program a success. Also, the entire Energy Street Festival was filmed by a local filmmaker.

A Flash Mob is a large group of people who gather at a public location to perform a brief dance, and disperse rapidly after the event has concluded.

The February 13-26, 2011, programs took place in cooperation with Kas di Kultura, Archimedium, Prins Bernhard Culture Fund, Academy Hotel, Curacao Tourism Board, Penha, Freeport Jewelers, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Downtown Management Organization, Teatro Luna Blou, and La Tentashon. (Various media)

Aruba – Violence Used at Prison by Law Enforcement Officials?

The Aruba Public Prosecutor's Office will investigate whether excessive violence was used during the police intervention at the prisoners' protest on the roof of the Aruba KIA prison, last Sunday. According to the Public Prosecutor, the prisoners had offered considerable resistance during the process to contain the unrest. One of the eight prisoners had suffered injuries and was taken to the hospital for treatment.

The prisoners protested because the Joint Court of Justice suspended a Court of First Instance decision which mandated the government to reduce the number of prisoners per cell. (Various media)

Aruba – Universities of South Carolina and Aruba Sign MOU

The University of South Carolina (USC) completed a MOU with the University of Aruba (UA) for a faculty and student exchange and cooperative research program. The Universities want to strengthen their international relationship and reinforce their hospitality and tourism programs that also provide opportunities for graduate research. USC initiated a research and teaching collaboration with UA. The agreement supports faculty who intend to teach short-term modules in the same university. UA students have the opportunity to study at USC as out-of-state students while paying Aruba-based tuition. (Amigoe)

Curacao - U.S. Servicemen Active in Community Service Project

Approximately 30 staff members from the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter DILIGENCE, U.S. Consulate General Curaçao and the 429th Expeditionary Operations Squadron (EOS) located at the Forward Operating Location (U.S. FOL) on Curaçao volunteered their time to prepare a site for a garden at the Siloam Orphanage-Hospice in Soto on Saturday, February 26, 2011.

In step one of a larger project, the group worked as a team to clear brush and prepare the ground for planting. Building blocks were also moved to provide access to a well for future irrigation and to lay the groundwork for a storage building. The project's end goal is to make Siloam Orphanage-Hospice more financially independent by enabling it to grow some of its own food. (Antilliaans Dagblad)

Dutch Caribbean – Important OCT Future Conference

Curacao and Aruba Ministers Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands Sheldry Osepa and Edwin Abath, and St. Maarten PM Sarah Wescot-Williams are attending the annual Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) EU Forum (1-4 March) in Noumea, New Caledonia. The current Overseas Association Decision of 2001 will expire in 2013. The proposal for a revised Decision is therefore planned for 2012. In preparation for this, the European Commission launched a Green Paper in 2008 to study the future development of EU-OCT relationships, followed by a Communication in 2009.

OCTs are non-European countries and territories that have constitutional ties with one of the following Member States: Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. All inhabitants of the 24 OCTs are, in principle, European citizens, however, OCTs do not constitute EU territory. The OCTs are associated with the European Union with a view to promoting their economic and social development and establishing close economic relations between them and the Union as a whole. They are all parliamentary democracies, they are all islands, their populations are very small and their ecological richness is extraordinary compared to continental Europe. They are all relatively vulnerable to external shocks and are in general dependent on a narrow economic base that mostly revolves around services. None of them is a sovereign country.

At this year's Forum, discussions will focus on the future of OCT-EU relations, public health, environment, evaluating past cooperation and the OCT future.

The OCTs are facing many challenges such as: remoteness, vulnerability to economic shocks and climate change, difficulties to build and maintain infrastructure, or sustainable energy supply. OCTs benefit from the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) with a total of US \$394 million over the period 2008-2013.

From a European perspective, as part of a mutual relationship, the OCTs can be important actors in their respective regions in promoting core values of the EU, such as human rights, rule of law, environmental protection, etc.

An “Urban Infrastructures for Socially Deprived Areas” program to improve the living conditions of low income residents and assist poverty alleviation on Curacao, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Saba, and Statia is currently being implemented, with a financial contribution of US \$33 million. It aims to create adequate and accessible social infrastructure and services in socially deprived low-income housing communities. The program will also enable the island government’s public works department concerned with social infrastructure to deliver suitable and timely services on a sustainable basis. It will notably improve infrastructure and services in a minimum of 12 existing and green field low-income housing settlements, including roads, electricity, drainage and irrigation and improved water supply systems, treatment and distribution networks in 6 housing communities. (Various media)

Aruba – Joran Van Der Sloot Faces 30-year Prison Sentence

Peruvian prosecutors plan to seek a 30-year prison sentence for Joran van der Sloot in the slaying of a young woman in Lima, a lawyer for van der Sloot told a Dutch paper. Van der Sloot, a longtime suspect in the disappearance of Natalee Holloway, is also charged in the United States with extorting money from the Alabama teen's mother. Lawyer Maximo Altez told de Telegraaf newspaper that Peruvian authorities have completed their investigation into the May 30, slaying of Stephany Flores. The 21-year-old Peruvian business student was found dead in van der Sloot's hotel room. Van der Sloot, a 23-year-old Dutch citizen from Aruba, has been in police custody since last summer. He is charged with first-degree murder and robbery in the case. Stephany Flores was killed exactly five years after Holloway, 18, vanished while on a trip to Aruba to celebrate her high school graduation. Her body has never been found, but authorities believe she is dead. Prosecutors in Peru believe there is sufficient evidence in Flores' slaying to keep van der Sloot behind bars until 2040, de Telegraaf reported. (Various media)

Bonaire – Selibon Purchases U.S. Made Garbage Trucks

Bonaire’s government-owned waste processing service Selibon received two new garbage trucks from Dodge Centre, MN-based McNeilus Companies, Inc., an Oshkosh Corporation International. (Daily Herald)

Curacao - Libya Residents Had US \$62 Billion in Overseas Banks

Libyan residents, some of whom are targeted by a United Nations-imposed asset freeze, had \$62.1 billion deposited in overseas bank accounts at the end of September, according to the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). Most deposits were from banks in Libya, including branches of foreign institutions, while \$8.2 billion was from non-bank Libyan residents, according to quarterly banking statistics compiled by the BIS and last released on Jan. 28.

The European Union yesterday imposed an arms embargo and other sanctions including an asset freeze and the U.S. said it has frozen \$30 billion in Libyan assets in what the U.S. treasury called the largest blocking “ever.” Canada, Switzerland, the U.K. and Austria have also frozen the assets of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi and his

entourage. The BIS statistics are based on reports from 43 countries, including most developed nations and offshore centers such as the Cayman Islands, the former Netherlands Antilles (Curacao) and the British Channel Islands. The figures don't cover direct investments by Libyans in assets overseas. (La Prensa)

BES – Election Day: Polls Open

Polling stations in the Netherlands and on the BES-Islands opened this morning at 7:30 am and will stay open till 9 pm. The Dutch elect new provincial councils today. The newly elected provincial councils will subsequently elect the Senate on May 23. The BES islands do not vote for a provincial council but instead for new Island parliaments. It is expected that the newly elected parliaments will continue the integration process with little anticipated changes on the BES islands. (Various media)

Curacao – Small Island Developing States Conference

The University of Curacao (UOC) will host the 1st International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Development and Developing States (SIDS), March 4-7, 2011. Governance, economics, social work, tourism, conservation, zoning, health care, education, climate change, water, technology and ICT will be discussed during round tables and by various panels during the conference. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is one of the conference contributors.

During the conference, UOC will introduce the UNESCO Chair "Caribbean Small Island Developing States". The objective of the UNESCO chair is: "To become an open center of collaborative excellence in the field of policy-oriented research on issues of Sustainable Development of SIDS in the context of globalization of the Caribbean, leveraging on the unique insights that can be provided by knowledge production processes based on participatory research, involving stakeholders in the Sustainable Development of SIDS." (Various media)

Bonaire – Elections: Most Seats For UPB; Coalition Possible?

The Bonaire Patriotic Union (UPB) of Ramonsito Booi won Bonaire's Island Council elections with three seats. Democratic Party (DP) led by Robby Beukenboom captured two seats, the Free Bonaire Movement (MBL) of Benito Dirksz and the Pro Justice and Union party (PHU) of Michiel Bijkerk each managed to obtain one seat.

None of the parties gained enough seats for a one-party majority, thus forming a coalition could be difficult. UPB might be the loser of this election if differences in party platforms discourage the other parties from joining with UPB in a coalition. All of the other parties are critical of Bonaire's new constitutional position within the Netherlands. Yesterday's elections were considered free and fair and the voter turnout was 74%. (Various media)

Statia – Elections: DP Loses Majority; Coalition Imminent

The Democratic Party (DP) has lost its majority in the Island Council election by losing two of its four seats. The Progressive Labor Party (PLP), St. Eustatius Empowerment Party (STEP) and United People's Coalition (UPC) each won one seat in the new Island Council.

The PLP, STEP, UPC all have criticized Statia's new constitutional status within the Dutch Kingdom. A changed tax system, dollarization, and increased Dutch influence are thorny issues for many Statians. 1,455 out of 2,135 eligible voters casted their vote in the free and fair election process. (Various media)

Saba – Elections: WIPM Captures Four Out Of Five Seats

The Windward Islands People's Movement (WIPM) stays at the Saba government helm after sweeping four of the five Island Council seats in Wednesday's election. The only other party on the ballot, Saba Labor Party (SLP), will occupy the fifth seat. 87% of 955 eligible voters cast their votes in the election which was deemed free and fair. (Various media)

Statia – Dutch MP Raised Concern About NuStar Expansion Plan

Dutch opposition Socialist Party MP Ronald Van Raak suggested a St. Eustatius referendum after San Antonio-based NuStar Energy L.P. announced their expansion plans in November 2010. NuStar Energy, operator of a storage and transshipment of crude oil and petroleum products facility in St. Eustatius, wants to build a tank farm to improve its capacity on the island. The entire construction project would include 15 to 40 tanks and a new jetty. Construction of the new tanks would provide 25 to 40 new, full-time jobs and 250 to 500 jobs in construction, which may be finished by 2013, a NuStar spokesperson said.

MP Van Raak expressed numerous concerns in Dutch Parliament as to the proposed expansion plan. He questioned whether the extra jobs would benefit Statians, and criticized the potentially negative physical and economic impacts of the expansion in such a small community. Van Raak also inquired about the possible impact on tourism if a significant portion of the island is to be industrialized.

NuStar provides jobs for 139 people and contributes to 38.5% of the island's Gross Domestic Product and 49.8% of government expenditures. (Various media)

St. Maarten – Cuban TIP Case in Court

Two of five persons arrested in a human smuggling case appeared in court this week for their alleged attempt to smuggle nine Cubans into St. Maarten.

The five persons, including a local taxi driver, were arrested after law enforcement officials intercepted the illegal Cubans in a bus. It is unclear whether St. Maarten was their final destination. All nine alleged Cuban victims submitted a request for asylum. One of the smugglers owns and operates a mini-grocery store in Florida. The judge will rule in the case within three weeks. (Daily Herald)

St. Maarten – PM Wescot-Williams: Proud To Be An OCT Member

St. Maarten PM Sarah Wescot-Williams told leaders and representatives of governments at the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)/European Union (EU) Forum that St. Maarten is proud to be part of the new EU relations vision. "We are looking forward to work together with all partners in the endeavor to realize the new relations. This is a partnership where we all have mutual interests and we shall walk the journey together," she said in a speech at the forum's opening session. (Daily Herald)

St. Maarten – Prosecutors Call For Legal Tools to Prosecute TIP

St. Maarten Prosecutors are calling for legal tools to prosecute Trafficking in Persons and Human Smuggling cases. The former Netherlands Antilles government was involved in a multi-year process to change the entire penal code and to include TIP penalties, but never finished the process prior to dissolution last year. St. Maarten Justice Minister Roland Duncan said it is a government priority to pass the new penal code, but no target date was set. Prosecutors use other articles in the penal and labor code to prosecute TIP and Human Smuggling perpetrators. "It is an absolute imperative that we need to get an up-to-date penal code; give us the tools to work with," Prosecutor Hans Mos said. (Daily Herald)

Aruba – Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard Intercepts Narco Boat

The Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard intercepted the boat "I love Aruba Guide" at sea near Aruba with an undisclosed amount of narcotics aboard. The crew of two was arrested pending investigation of the case. (Various media)

St. Maarten - Thief Steals Almost US \$250,000 Via Plane's Lavatory

An ingenious thief swiped almost US \$250,000 on a flight in the Caribbean after sneaking into the cash-laden cargo hold via the toilet. A Brink's security employee placed three sacks of cash containing a total US \$1.6 million in the hold of the Guadalupe-based Air Antilles plane before it headed from the French island of Guadeloupe to St. Maarten. The security guard took his seat on the ATR-42 turboprop plane, but when the flight landed 40 minutes later it was discovered that US \$238,000 was missing from the sacks. Cleaners who found bundles of notes in the lavatory raised the alarm. The case is under investigation. (Antilles Post)

CURAÇAO

Crime February 25 – March 3

On February 25, a business in Brievengat was robbed by three men. The suspects were later apprehended by the police. The same day, a bakery in Rooi Santu was robbed. On February 27, a teenager in Seru Papaya was shot and injured in an accidental shooting. On February 28, a pedestrian in Welatina was robbed by two men (Amigoe, Extra, Antilliaans Dagblad).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime February 25 – March 3

On February 26, the body of a French citizen was found in Mullet Bay. The man appeared to have been murdered. The case is under investigation (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time).

Staff increases at Public Prosecutor's Office

Chief Public Prosecutor Rienk Mud has come to the end of his three-year stint in St. Maarten. Mud returns to the Netherlands later this month and will be succeeded by Hans Mos. Mos told the press that the Public Prosecutor's Office's role in St. Maarten was expanding, making the current workload too great for the existing team of eight prosecutors. Plans are in place to increase the number to 14 prosecutors by the end of the year and eventually to 19. The St. Maarten Police Department will also see an increase to 375 officers, although this has not started yet due to a lack of funds (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time).

"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Dutch Caribbean press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."